

could be made. Jefferson felt his helplessness, and longed the day when his tenure of office, should cease. His term expired on June 1st, 1781, but the Assembly, then in session at Charlottesville near Monticello, neglected to choose a successor, and for twelve days Virginia was without a Governor. A party arose advocating a dictator for the crisis. This Jefferson opposed with all his might. "The very thought," he declared, "was treason, against the people, was treason against mankind in general." Whether Jefferson could have elected for a third term or not is problematical. In the legislature there was considerable muttering. One member charged the Governor with incompetency. Jefferson removed the question of his re-election, by declining to serve further. Through his influence his friend General Nelson, was chosen his successor. Supreme military power was conferred on Nelson, but he proved to be as powerless as Jefferson to give relief from the invader, and his dictatorial power only served to make him unpopular. In a few months he threw up office in disgust. There was no relief until Washington should come down from the north.

The day after his term of office expired, Jefferson was visited at his home at Monticello by a body of raiders detached from Tarleton. The object of the visit was to carry away Jefferson as a rich prize of war, but a lucky circumstance balked the enterprise. Jefferson having been warned that the enemy was coming to Monticello, put his family into safe hands and privately sent it away. He was perfectly cool in the midst of all. He lingered to save some of his cherished papers. After remaining as long as he thought prudent, he went to his blacksmith shop to get his horse, which he had ordered to be shod before a hard run. Before mounting he ascended the hill a way, and at a favorite spot, with the aid of his telescope surveyed Charlottesville and the whole region round about could see no trace of an enemy. He listened, and there was stillness. Concluding that the alarm was false, he continued to return to his mansion and save a few more of his papers. He had gone toward the house but a little way